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The Light Knot Grass *Acrionicta menyanthidis* (Esp.) (Lep.: Noctuidae) in Norfolk

Seven light traps (three mercury-vapour bulbs and four actinics), were operated at Dersingham Bog, Norfolk (grid reference TF 665283) on the very foggy night of 8 May 2000. Dersingham Bog is an extensive area of acid bogland, managed by English Nature, with flora typical of this habitat, including Cotton grass *Eriophorum* sp. and Bog Myrtle *Myrica gale*. It is one of only a handful of such sites in north Norfolk. We were hoping to encounter the somewhat local plume moth *Buckleria paludum* (Zell.), which feeds as a larva on sundew *Drosera* spp., and can also be seen during daylight. No examples of the plume moth were seen, but we were quite surprised when we visited one of the more secluded mercury vapour traps out on the bog amongst boggy Heather *Calluna vulgaris*, and discovered a very fresh looking Light Knot Grass.

The British distribution of this species is not now much altered from that presented by Heath & Emmet (1983. *Moths and Butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland* (MBGBI), volume 10, distribution map on page 138). In this work, records are shown confined to the north and west of a line drawn between the Humber and the Severn, with a single pre-1970 locality shown for Norfolk in grid square TF91. Records are also shown for Ireland. The Norfolk records are, therefore, apparently worth reviewing here.

The record shown in MBGBI is that included on a recording card submitted to Monks Wood by K. C. Durrant and gives a list of macro moths for the 10-km square TF91, which he labels "East Dereham area: arable with small plantations". The records come from the period 1940-1960, but there is no further information of relevance.

In the nineteenth century, single larvae were found at Hickling Broad (grid reference TG42) and Barton Turf (grid reference TG32) in about 1870, and an adult was reared so confirming the records (Barrett, 1901. *Lepidoptera*. In *Victoria County History* **1**: 135-162). Bog myrtle still grows at Barton Turf, though no longer at Hickling. These records evidently escaped the compilers of MBGBI.

The moth is known currently from Roydon Common (grid reference TF 6922), which lies some six kilometres to the south-east of Dersingham. Bernard Skinner attracted twenty adults to a single light on 13 June 1980 (of which two were the melanic ab. *suffusa* Tutt), whilst Gerry Haggitt informs me that several have been

taken since, including by himself in 1992 and 1993. I therefore visited Roydon Common myself on 15 May 2000 to see if I could demonstrate its continuing presence and was delighted to capture four examples – all of the typical form. As much a surprise was a Flame Wainscot *Mythimna flammea* (Curtis) at the sheet, rarely known away from the Broads and the fens of Cambridgeshire. A Barred Hook-tip *Watsonalla cultraria* (Fabr.) also came to light as well as a good selection of moorland/heathland tortrix moths such as *Ancylis uncella* (D.& S.), *A. unguicella* (L.), *Pseudococcyx turionella* L., *P. posticana* (Zett.), *Epinotia rubiginosana* (H.-S.) and *Acleris rufana* (D.& S.). In spite of being known to a select, though evidently fairly wide, circle of entomologists, it would appear that the existence of this locality has never before made it in to print?

There do not appear to be any other records of this species away from north-west Britain.

I am most grateful to Mark Telfer at the Biological Records Centre, ITE Monks Wood, to Gerry Haggett, Bernard Skinner and Colin Plant for helpful information on the Norfolk records of this species.— JON CLIFTON, Kestrel Cottage, Station Road, Hindolveston, Norfolk NR20 5DE.

The Nine-spotted *Amata phegea* (L.) (Lep.: Ctenuchidae) in Essex

Mr Peter Smith recently passed to me a photograph taken in the Clacton-on-Sea area of an adult moth, apparently *Amata phegea*, sitting on a cluster of developing blackberries. The image was taken on 24 July 2000 by Mr R. Goodson. Mr Goodson at first thought the insect was a butterfly, but fellow amateur photographer Mr R. Cowling recognised it as being a moth and sought confirmation with Mr E. Sewell, who realised the possible importance and showed the picture to Peter. Peter made some enquiries and acquired the slide, and with his help I was able to interview Mr Goodson and find out a little more of the circumstances, although by now two months had passed. Mr Goodson, who was not at all interested in the record and found the fuss his picture had generated rather a surprise, is retired and noticed the insect during a cycle ride, the purpose of which was to try out his new camera with some shots of the local railway. Having a lens with macro capability allowed Mr Goodson to take a sharp, well-exposed picture of what we assume is most likely to be *Amata phegea*.

The only other British occurrence of *A. phegea* was on the Kent coast between Folkestone and Dover, on 24 June 1872, when one was taken flying in sunshine (Batchelor, 1874. Entom. 7: 88 as *Syntomis phegea* – see also Emmet & Heath 1979. *Moths and Butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland*, vol. 9: 111); that specimen is figured in South (1961. *The Moths of the British Isles*. Warne).

The distribution map given in de Freina & Witt (1987. *Die Bombyces und Sphinges der Westpalaearktis*. Verlag) shows that *A. phegea* is widespread in Europe. Although absent from Iberia, the Mediterranean islands and southern Italy, it extends eastwards from France through the entire Western Palaearctic Region, but